

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1018
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 3998

EO 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PDIP, SN, US, NV
SUBJECT: SINGAPORE VIEWS ON US-SRV NORMALIZATION

REF: STATE 224125

1. SUMMARY: SINGAPORE PRESS AND PRIVATE COMMENTS
GENERALLY FAVOR US-SRV NORMALIZATION, EMPHASIZING
IMPORTANCE OF STABILIZING SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST
ASIA AND HELPING VIETNAM TO AVOID BECOMING TOO
DEPENDENT ON THE SOVIET UNION. END SUMMARY.

2. IN SEPTEMBER 5 DISCUSSION WITH POLOFF, NATIONAL
TRADE UNION CONGRESS SEC-GEN AND PEOPLES ACTION
PARTY STALWART DEVAN NAIR RAISED QUESTION OF US
POLICY TOWARD NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS WITH
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VIETNAM. HE VOLUNTEERED THAT HE THOUGHT IT IMPORTATN
THAT THE US NOT MISS THE PPRESENT OPPORTUNITY TO
NORMALIZE RELATIONS IN ORDER TO STABILIZE THE
SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND TO KEEP VIETNAM
FROM BECOMING TOO DEPENDENT ON THE SOVIET UNION.
NAIR IS A CLOSE COLLEAGUE OF THE PRIME MINISTER,
AND CAN BE EXPECTED TO REFLECT VIEWS OF SINGAPORE

LEADERSHIP.

3. RECENT VISITOR TO VIETNAM, HEAD OF QUAKER INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, TOLD POLOFF SEPTEMBER 5 THAT VIETNAMESE CONSIDERED VISIT OF CODEL MONTGOMERY A GREAT SUCCESS. HE ADDED THAT SRV OFFICIALS SEEMED UNIFORMLY EAGER FOR OUTSIDE CONTACTS, AND THAT THERE WERE EVEN SOME WHO OPENLY EXPRESSED DESIRE NOT TO BECOME TOO DEPENDENT ON SOVIET UNION. HE SAID THAT VIETNAMESE WHOM HE MET WERE OBVIOUSLY EAGER TO REESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH US; HE COMMENTED THAT HE (LIKE OTHER VISITORS) HAD BEEN SHOWN THE BUILDING IN HANOI WHICH VIETNAMESE TOLD HIM WAS READY FOR AMERICAN OCCUPANCY. (HIS COMMENTS ON SITUATION IN VIETNAM ARE BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY.) (END CONFIDENTIAL)

4. (BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED) SEVERAL EDITORIALS APPEARED IN RESPONSE TO CODEL MONTGOMERY VISIT TO VIETNAM AND LAOS; MOST SUMMARIZED PRESENT STATE OF US-VIETNAMESE RELATIONS, REASONS FOR VIETNAMESE EAGERNESS TO ESTABLISH RELATIONS, AND EFFECT ON ADMINISTRATION POLICY OF US CONGRESSIONAL OPPOSITION TO NORMALIZATION. NEW NATION AUGUST 25 EDITORIAL COMMENTED THAT VIETNAM APPEARS "DESPERATE TO NORMALIZE TIES;" AND CONCLUDED: "IT REMAINS NOW CONFIDENTIAL

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FOR THE AMERICANS...TO LOOK FORWARD TO THE FUTURE AND COME TO TERMS WITH REALITY. AND THIS IS THAT A VIETNAM EMBITTERED BY AMERICAN BOYCOTT IS A DESTABILIZING FACTOR TO THE SECURITY OF THIS REGION. ONE TOTALLY IN RUSSIA'S EMBRACE IS EVEN WORSE." CHINESE LANGUAGE SIN CHEW JIT POH ON AUGUST 30 SUGGESTED THAT US-SRV NORMALIZATION WOULD "ENHANCE THE REPUTATION OF THE US AND CONSOLIDATE HER POSITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA." KNEIP

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